MAFIA TO BE EYED; MCC ASKING PROBE

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Kohn Releases Letter to City Council

By CLARENCE DOUCET

The Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans, Inc., Tuesday called for a thorough investigation of organized crime under authority of the City Council to culminate in public hearings.

The MCC position represented endorsement of a proposal for such action made last week by Ivor Trapolin, chairman of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Crime and Delinquency.

Aaron M. Kohn, MCC managing director, made the announcement at a press conference in International House at which he released a letter from the commission to the members of the City Council.

The letter was signed by Kohn and Dr. J. D. Grey, MCC president.

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It said: "This letter . . . is intended to communicate our belief that an investigation authorized and financed by the City Council, if appropriately conducted, can help to clarify the issue of organized crime and provide reliable data for guidance of the Council in dealing with the problem."

In calling for the investigation, the MCC said:

"The extensive organized crime operations in New Orleans, inter-involved with those in other cities and states, have been conclusively documented over many years, and continue to be susceptible to proof."

The letter also said:

—During the 1940s, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service was documenting organized crime as it established the basis for deportations;

MARCELLO FOUND HEAD

—In 1948, Carlos Marcello's application for a federal pardon, after his imprisonment as a narcotics wholesaler, was refused on the basis of a U.S. Justice Department investigation which found him to be the head of the rackets in the New Orleans area:

—In 1951, public hearings by the Senate committee headed by Sen. Estes Kefauver provided proof of organized crime and Kefauver called Marcello the

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"evil genius" at the top of organization;

— In April, 1954, a Special Citizens Investigating Committee of the New Orleans Commission Council submitted an 1,845-page, six volume report which listed hundreds of locations and individuals engaged in various forms of organized crime in the city.

—In November, 1957, the Apalachin, N.Y., meeting of Cosa Nostra bosses indicated people in the New Orleans area to be allied with top underworld figures in the nation;

—In 1957 and 1958, two Orleans Parish grand juries demanded their own legal advisers and investigative assistance, and finally returned about 50 indictments for public bribery against police officials and gambling racketeers.

—A report dated March 31, 1960, was published for the U.S. Senate committee which had completed hearings into labor-management rackets, and the report named the New Orleans area with Chicago, New York and Detroit, as places where racketeers had infiltrated the coin-operated device industry.

—The findings of another U.S. Senate investigation, published March 28, 1962, identified the New Orleans area as a major center of wire service activities for handbook operations.

The MCC recommended that the City Council-authorized investigation be initiated in a manner similar to that of the Special Citizens Investigating Committee, which, in substance, involved:

—An ordinance authorizing the investigation;

—Responsibility for the investigation delegated to a three-man committee, the members named by the Bureau of Governmental Research, the Metropolitan Crime Commission, and the New Orleans Chapter of the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI;

The committee was authorized to employ its own staff;

—The committee was delegated subpoena powers and power to place people under oath;

The committee was authorized to conduct private and public hearings;

—The City Council appropriated funds and turned them over to the committee, for accounting at the end of the investigation;

—The committee was authorized to make its report to the Council, mayor, district attorney and the grand jury.

The letter concluded:

"We believe an even more extensive investigation is now in order to provide the basis for aggressive action by the City Council against the entire spectrum of organized crime as it exists in our community today. We believe the investigation must be given, in fact, the independence and legal authority which will inspire public confidence. Those who direct the staff and activity must be clearly disassociated from political office or partisan politics, in order to encourage trust and cooperation of person in possession of information or evidence. It must be clear that the probe is serious, impartial and free of any 'whitewash' implications."